

# FIDO

in  
Prospect Park  
Fellowship In The Interest Of Dogs And Their Owners

WINTER 2011

## NEWSLETTER

### End of a Era

In 2011 we will have said farewell to Tupper Thomas who for the past twenty five years has reigned as Prospect Park Alliance President. We wish her well in her retirement. She was and still is a woman who is not afraid to seize any opportunity to make Prospect Park work for everyone.

There are moments in history where everything momentarily comes together, the normal pace of evolution snapping forward with a bang. It was such a moment some fifteen years ago that off-leash in New York City was born and it was invented right here in Prospect Park. It took the cooperation and energy of a dedicated bunch of dog owners coupled with the blessing of former City Parks Commissioner, Henry Stern. But it was Tupper Thomas who officially went out on a limb to invest in off-leash as we enjoy it today.

Off-leash is a concept not unlike time-share, where each park user group has their own time and space to themselves: dogs do their thing until 9 A.M., then rotate out to make way for the pee wee teams or soccer aficionados who in turn give way to picnickers. Back in these Paleozoic beginnings, dogs even had weekday afternoon hours as well, but only in the Nethermead beginning at five p.m. Of course 9 at night to 1 p.m. in the morning has always been official off-leash time for those with night vision.

The beauty of this plan was that Tupper knew at any hour of the day where all the dogs were and dog owners knew they could start and end the day sharing a mini-adventure with their best friend at their side. We hope in the immediate future that her successor shares the this same enlightened vision and with the cooperation of a benevolent city government, we will see another such burst of common sense – see the weekday afternoon off-leash hours restored.

This will be a suggestion that FIDO In Prospect Park will submit to our new Brooklyn Park Commission, Kevin Jeffrey, who took over this past autumn from thirty seven year veteran Commissioner. Julius Spiegel.

Mr. Jeffrey, former Deputy City Park Commissioner, brings welcome energy to his new post as well as a deep appreciation of the benefits that off-leash brings to the dog owner community and other park goers alike. Indeed, Mr. Jeffrey attended the FIDO sponsored “anniversary” commemorating New York City’s first year of official off-leash. We count Mr. Jeffrey as a FIDO friend and as New York City’s largest off-leash community, we hope we may be of service to him in the near future.

Your Vice President Bob Ipcar

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Thank you and have a great Summer

### Disclaimer

The views expressed by the writers are those of the writer and FIDO makes no representations as to the accuracy of the information contained therein.

### My Farewell as Your Editor

This is my final edition. I’m no longer the News letter’s editor, but I’m still in FIDO. As editor I did my best to bring you informative, useful copy. I hope you have enjoyed each edition.

I will still be on the steering committee as well as the person in charge of the Coffee Bark. I never did it alone, many people helped. I’m grateful to all those who have contributed to the Newsletter and to any other FIDO event.

FIDO like all organizations needs new ideas, other ways of looking at things and we need everyone to help to keep and make FIDO an even greater organization. So , please accept my thanks and join me to make our events even better.

Love Betty

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## When winter finally shows its teeth Here are canine safety tips to remember.

### Paws ...

Most dogs will benefit from direct paw protection such as booties and paw wax, available at local pet supply shops. liberally applied paw wax will help prevent burning to the pads from sidewalk "ice"

### Note from Paul Kowacki, FIDO SC member, Massachusetts ...

Dogs can incur an injury to their knee, requiring surgery, or twist their back, causing a fibrocartilaginous injury that is the equivalent of a ruptured disc in a human. We don't use boots on our dogs, as I suspect the dogs own pads and nails give the best grip. I'd think boots would be good for use to /from a park, take them off for play. Signs that your dog has uncomfortable painful feet include: whining, lifting of paws or frequently stopping on walks. If you suspect frozen paws, gently wash out the feet with warm water as opposed to brushing which may injure frozen paw tissue. FIDO member and Newfie owner, **Chris Hubbard**, recommends anti-slip things' for shoes called Yak Trax - available on the Internet for roughly \$15-\$20. Says they were absolutely awesome while living in Colorado! They Conserve Body Heat ...

### Cold weather dangers include chills and discomfort, hypothermia and frostbite.

In general the shorter the hair /fur the greater the protection your dog will need from the cold. Thin dogs, dogs with poor circulation, cardiovascular conditions, endocrine disorders; elderly dogs and puppies may not do well in extreme conditions. Dogs with diabetes may have impaired ability to cope with cold weather and may also have an impaired ability to feel pain, and thus not complain. For the overindulged hound, know that body fat offers some protection from the cold. When in doubt ask a fellow dog owner who has had winter experience with a similar breed /mix.

Doggie Winter Wear. We are giving, with a membership, winter coats and sweaters. They are also available at local shops, while custom coats and pullovers can be found on-line. Garments that cover the chest and abdomen as well as the back, provide better protection for vital organs such as the heart and lungs than do garments that primarily cover the back and sides. This is especially true if you have an older dog who might tend to lie down on the cold ground or snow. Remember to specify male or female when ordering garments - your male dog will thank you!

### When The Temperature Droops.

Frequently check your dog during walk and play by slipping your hand into their garment to be sure they're still warm beneath the sweater or coat. The temperature difference you feel on your dogs clothed areas verses unclothed Areas will often be visibly apparent. Feel the chest, abdomen, sides, and front of the neck. Feel the feet and especially the ears. As in humans, dog's ear tips are susceptible to frostbite. Frequently feel the dog's ears with your bare hands to be certain his ears are not to cold. A muff over the upper neck and lower head can insulate against the cold. You can make a head muff for your dog by cutting the top off a long acrylic human hat so that it becomes a long cylinder shape; simply pull it over the head. Muffs are also commercially available.

### Suspect Frostbite?

Never rub the direct area. Consult your vet! Dogs uncomfortable with the cold may be in a hurry to get back inside, therefore may not fully relieve themselves and may have frequent accidents. If your doggie becomes chilled, get them inside immediately; handle gently and re-warm in dry bedding and blankets. Better yet snuggle up with your pal using your own body heat for comfort.

### For your Own Safety ...

Wear contrasting colors against the snow that will help ensure that your dog is seen by drivers who must deal with reduced visibility from weather conditions or windshields encumbered by condensation, mud or ice. In addition, a driver may see the person walking the dog but not see the dog; or not see all the dogs if more than one animal is being walked.

### Big No No! Keep your dog on leash near the lake

Never let your pooch out onto a frozen pond because there may be thin areas.

Falling through ice can be fatal to both dog and the owner who attempts a rescue.

### Electrified Sidewalk Plates/ Manhole Covers .Street zaps

Streetzaps.com is a non-partisan initiative organized and led by Blair Sorrel to reduce the year round risk of injury and fatality from contact voltage shocking or electrocution resulting from damaged or tampered wiring. Report a hazard to 311 first - then to street zaps. Electrified encounters on the sidewalk just may be one of the most unrecognized and under-diagnosed problems facing the urban dog during the winter season.

Salt applied to icy streets and sidewalks makes its way to the electrical infrastructure below the surface where it corrodes aging wires and enhances conductivity of stray voltage. A few years ago a dog named Barkus was electrocuted here in Park Slope

on ThirdStreet just above 4th Avenue. An unused, unsealed lamppost connection buried in the concrete leaked live voltage all the way to the surface. Most dog owners will simply not recognize stray voltage when it happens unless a dog is shocked so severely that he yelps, can't move; shake violently or the human feels an electrical shock as well. The reaction of a stoic well behaved dog who suddenly bolts or pulls may be dismissed, while the lesser trained dog who pulls all the time will be seen as behaving in character consistent with his disposition. Three winters ago, Denali, a South Slope Spinone Italiano was on his way home from the park when he leaped into the air seemingly for no reason, a behavior way out of character. Immediately stray voltage was suspected yet there was no apparent injury to his paws. Annabell, a Great Dane who had been walking next to Denali was unaffected, having apparently just missed the voltage spot. We called 311 Immediately ... There was an immediate response from the Fire Dept as well as Con Edison. Con Ed expressed concern for Denali's welfare and later confirmed the presence of stray voltage that had even electrified the metal areaway fence on the corner house! Con Edison did a lot of refurbishing of power lines at many local intersections during the course of that winter.

### Again look for the following warning signs ...

Your dog may suddenly bolt for no reason. They may appear frozen in a spot, shaking violently. They may have a street lamp or spot on the sidewalk that they're afraid of. These are all good indicators of trouble brewing. Stray electricity is invisible so give your dog the benefit of the doubt. If your dog wants to avoid a section of sidewalk it may be for good reason. DO NOT reach in to help your dog! Touching your dog if they collapse may prove fatal to you as well! Several years ago, a woman died trying to rescue her dogs from an electrified metal grating in the East Village and the rescuing officers were also severely shocked. Reconsider letting your dog urinate on lampposts. The traditional fire hydrant is a lot safer. Take a look at the street lamps in your area. Are there loose wires visible? Are all of the panels in place or is there obvious need of repair? Call 311 immediately. Rubber soled dog shoes or boots probably offer substantial protection.

### Finally: Don't Eat Green Snow; Blue Snow...

Yellow snow is bad enough but green /blue snow represents icy puddles of antifreeze. Antifreeze poisoning is a true medical emergency that kills far more pets than electrocution.

Antifreeze is sweet tasting, and occasionally gets spilled or leaked in the street and may be swallowed by dogs sneaking a puddle to relieve thirst or just licking their paws after walking through it. If you suspect antifreeze poisoning contact a veterinarian immediately!

By **Bob Ipcar**



## The Steering Committee Of FIDO In Prospect Park



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Lost dog guy - FIDO  
Heavy Lifter!



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Dog identification



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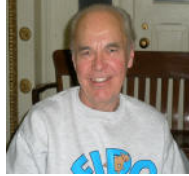
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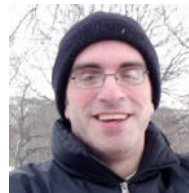
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individual rehabilitation of  
dogs. Helps people t with dog  
friendly Real estate and  
apartments



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**Nancy Keness**  
Canine Rehabilitation  
Seminar Chair



**December's Dog of the Month Rosie:**  
**Sometimes they Come Back**

Those of you who regularly attend the Coffee Bark have met Rosie, my latest foster dog. She's the quiet brindle mix in the orange "Adopt Me" vest attached to the tall handsome guy (that being me). Remember to go to [www.mightymutts.org](http://www.mightymutts.org) for more information about her and other dogs and cats in our care. Rosie's story is especially sad because she had to be rescued twice. I remember when I first met her. She was 8 months old and had just been rescued a couple of days before from a backyard breeder in New Jersey. This man was notorious for breeding purebreds and mixes in filthy conditions, selling puppies

to support his drinking habit, dumping and killing the rest. Rosie was taken from him just before he was about to kill her .

Rosie was always very shy. When we would bring her to our weekly adoption event at Union Square she would just curl up into a ball, afraid of most people. Luckily a young couple saw and fell in love with her and eventually adopted her. Normally that would be the happy end to the story.

Three years later, Rosie suffered from being abandoned from the family she loved and trusted. Rosie's parents contacted us in May. They had married and moved to Seattle shortly after adopting Rosie. The wife was 8 months pregnant, she was in panic over taking care of a dog and a baby at the same time.

They were threatening us that they would put Rosie to sleep if there wasn't something we can do to take her back. Mighty Mutts always takes dogs back so we convinced them to ship Rosie by plane from Seattle to New York where we would care for her again.

At the time, I had just found a home for my foster Gregory. As soon as I heard about what was going on, I agreed to foster Rosie, until a home was found for her. A couple of days later, a volunteer arrived at my apartment trailed by a beautiful, sad, shy and shaking Rosie . Being abandoned by a family that she loved and stuck in a crate for 6 hours in the baggage section of the flight from Seattle left Rosie afraid and shattered. For several days she would stay in her crate unless it was time to get fed or be walked. After a couple of days of loving from me and goofiness from my two dogs, Rosie began to realize she was in a home where she was safe, loved and cared for.

It amazes me that Rosie was abandoned by the people that adopted her. She is the biggest moosh (that's the professional term) ever. She wants to be near me so much she is never more than two feet from me at any time, she follows me from room to room. She loves being cuddled, held, and has decided she wants to challenge the record for world's biggest lapdog. She never ceases to make me laugh and smile.

Unfortunately, Rosie has proven to be hard to adopt. As sweet as she is, people have resisted her charms because she isn't a puppy . She is about five years old, not very high energy, while friendly she tends to be shy and laid back among people she meets for the first time. I recommend her highly. If you are looking for a running and jumpy kind of dog, Rosie is not for you. If you want a dog that will always be by your side and will love you forever, Rosie will make you happy for the rest of her life.

I'm sure some of you must be wondering why I don't keep her. Believe me, I have been tempted. I don't think I'll ever be as sad to see a dog leave my care as I will when Rosie leaves to her forever home. I realized something about myself. Leave it to FIDO and the Coffee Bark to teach something that I could never have learned on my own., I was talking to someone at a Bark about Rosie and she said 'besides being a real estate salesperson, being a rescuer is what I am. Funny how that never dawned on me . She's right. I love my job but animal rescue is my passion. If I keep Rosie, I could never foster another dog (three dogs is the most I can deal without going crazy). Helping abandoned and neglected animals reminds me about what is really important in life.

You should try it sometime. I'm sure some of you will learn to feel the same wonderful feeling too.

By **Robert Herskovitz**

## **AT YOUR WORST MOMENT FIDO COMES TO HELP YOU WITH GREAT SUCCESS: WE HELP FIND YOUR LOST DOG OR CAT**

Severe budget cuts are forcing the animal shelters across the City to stop taking any lost pet reports, starting December 1, 2010 . It is now more important than ever for pet owners, park-goers and the community to become FIDO members. FIDO's community-based networking, tagging all FIDO's members pets with a numbered tag, which you can get at any coffee bark, just see Pat Mullins. We now have a data base of dogs that can easily be traced with [www.fidolostdog.com](http://www.fidolostdog.com). It is the first of its kind immediate response system. Dog owners are encouraged to join FIDO to obtain a blue pet tag. Our lost and found service continues to help you at your worst moment, when you lose your beloved pet. A necessary complement to the largest off-leash community in New York City, is locating and retrieving your dog and getting your dog back on-leash, after the off-leash period ends. FIDO has been successfully finding lost pets since the early 1990's. Bob Ipcar, one of the longest-tenured continuing FIDO members going back well over a decade, attributes FIDO's great success in finding lost pets to our strong community base, networking.

FIDO lost and found is ever-evolving and ad hoc. It started simply as a community-bulletin board posting, and evolved over the years with the technology of emailing, texting and cell phones. The evolution, however, does not discard the old ways of finding but adds to and builds on them so today, FIDO's lost and found still relies on word-of-mouth, hoofing and looking, bicycling, posters, photos, community board postings, emailing, cell-phones, texting and anything else that works at the moment. Common to all the evolving technology, according to Bob Ipcar, Our community cares and that's what we have in Brooklyn, FIDO in Prospect Park in a community that really cares and really gets involved You can join FIDO by going on their website at [www.fidobrooklyn.org](http://www.fidobrooklyn.org), or getting a free cup of joe and breakfast snacks for you and your dog at FIDO's famous Coffee Bark, held the first Saturday of every month from 7am to 9am. Long-standing community FIDO Steering Committee members Tony, Betty, Lynn, Pat, Garry and others, along with Bob Ipcar, are always ensuring the success of the decades-old tradition. You can join FIDO get your Pet its special blue tag a FIDO T-shirt and, of course, get FIDO's great and famous FIDO Calendar which calendars all the Coffee Barks and other events. FIDO's Coffee Bark is our community meeting place where everyone gets together and exchanges information. Just as recently as Saturday, November 6, during the very moment that Hofstra University was interviewing FIDO's Bob Ipcar for their "Spotlight" series, a distraught park-goer with her daughter walked-up frantically looking for help to find her friend's lost dog named Maddie. Within minutes, cell-phones were ringing, texting and emails were broadcast ed to our FIDO networked-community. A FIDO Steering Committee member drove up and down the streets from 2nd to 19th streets from Prospect Park West to 5th Avenue looking for Maddie. As it turns out, another FIDO member saw Maddie and walked her home. Another happy ending. Pip a small white dog often visited our Park. On one Prospect Park visit, Pip became separated from his family. Remarkably, Pip was found riding home on the F-train. Happily and successfully, a member of our community picked-up Pip and returned Pip to his family. FIDO's never-ending quest to do their best in finding lost pets and updating their tactics and join FIDO's ever-growing community based networking efforts to find as quickly and safely as possible.

Visiting FIDO's website: [www.fidobrooklyn.org](http://www.fidobrooklyn.org) is very helpful. It has great recommendations and tips to help find and prepare you in the event your pet is lost.

By Michael Devereaux

## **RABIES NO THREAT TO OFF-LEASH AS LONG AS YOUR DOGS ARE PROPERLY VACCINATED**

Rabies, a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal, or saliva is not a threat to off-leash to our dogs and cats as long as they are properly vaccinated. You need to ensure that the vaccination has not expired. The veterinarian Dr. Jennifer Chaitman, DVM, ACVIM (<http://www.vimasny.com>), states that rabies has never been transmitted to a dog or cat that has been properly vaccinated. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, there has not been a rabid dog reported in New York City in over 50 years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the "CDC"), states that it is when your dog, cat is unvaccinated and exposed to a rabid animal that it should be and will be seized and euthanized. Thus the urgent importance of proper vaccination cannot be over-stated. Keep the vaccinations records in a safe, readily accessible place. Notably, Dr. Chaitman states that human can also be vaccinated against rabies, veterinarians are vaccinated against rabies. However, your pet's veterinarian cannot administer vaccinations to you. Humans need to go their physician to be vaccinated.

Generally, however, as long as your pet is properly vaccinated, you, shouldn't need to be vaccinated. According to the CDC, the vast majority of rabies cases reported each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes. There is presently an outbreak of raccoon rabies in and around Central Park, Manhattan. One raccoon from Prospect Park tested positive for rabies. Transmission of rabies usually begins when infected saliva of a rabid animal is passed to an uninfected and non-vaccinated animal see :(<http://cdc.gov/rabies/transmission/index.html>).

The most common mode of rabies virus transmission is through the bite and virus-containing saliva of the infected animal. The CDC reports that even if your properly vaccinated dog or cat, is exposed to a rabid animal your dog or cat will need to be kept under observation for 45 days( at your expense) see (<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/pets/index.html>). The CDC reports that small mammals such as squirrels, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rabbits and hares are almost never found to be infected with rabies and have not been known to cause rabies among humans in the United States. The most important thing for you to do, is to ensure your dog or cat is currently vaccinated.

By Michael Devereaux



**Fellowship in the interest of dogs and their owners**

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Whatever you can afford

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dogs names: \_\_\_\_\_ tag # | \_\_\_\_\_ tag # | \_\_\_\_\_ tag # | \_\_\_\_\_ tag# |

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Please send my copy of the Newsletter by U.S.. Mail  Hold the email

**FIDO would like to know ...**

On behalf of dogs, their owners and the parks? ( Circle the letter of the one or two most important sentiments to you.)

- A. the importance of promoting off-leash activities for all dogs and their owners
- B. to protect off-leash and other dog and owner rights that maybe threatened.
- C. To promote use of Prospect Park and the diversity of it's activities.
- D. I like being part of this group, enjoy the social opportunities and being able to help.
- E. I support off leash politically and financially, but have limited free time.

Your comments suggestions, gripes or compliments for FIDO, Prospect Park or other, will help.